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**Personnel**

**AIR UNIVERSITY DEGREE GRANTING AND ACCREDITATION**

**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY**

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This instruction assigns responsibility for actions pertaining to the Air University (AU) Degree Granting and Accreditation policies/procedures. It applies to all AU schools and colleges except the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF), the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), and the School of Advanced Airpower Studies (SAAS).

**1. Responsibilities.** The Chief Academic Affairs Office (HQ AU/CFA) is responsible for initiating AU degree granting and accreditation requests outside Air University. All actions involving congressional degree granting and accreditation procedures must be coordinated with HQ AU/CF.

**1.1. HQ AU/CFA:**

1.1.1. Prepares committee reports and information required by Air Staff, AETC/CC, AU/CC, and accrediting agencies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the regional accrediting organization in the Southeast.

1.1.2. Using inputs from AU organizations, prepares documentation for the purpose of attaining congressional degree granting authority and regional accreditation for AU and associated schools.

1.1.3. Periodically makes informal contact with the US Department of Education (DOE) and SACS on issues pertinent to accreditation. This informal contact serves a twofold purpose: it keeps external agencies in the information loop and allows AU to stay abreast of current news and process or procedural changes.

1.1.4. Assists AU organizations by establishing committees and/or functional teams necessary to attain the goals of congressional degree granting and regional accreditation.

1.1.5. Requests inputs from AU organizations, when necessary, to develop comprehensive self-appraisal reports and self-studies for submission to the US DOE, SACS, and other appropriate agencies.

1.1.6. Follows strict timelines and sequences of events, developed in cooperation with SACS, to facilitate the achievement of the many steps required to achieve and maintain regional accreditation. (See para 2.2.)

1.1.7. Maintains knowledge of regional accreditation requirements and provides guidance and information to AU organizations on these requirements to assure currency of knowledge concerning accreditation requirements.

1.1.8. Finalizes administrative arrangements (to include funding) necessary for formal visits to Maxwell AFB, AL, from agencies such as the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI), the US DOE, and SACS. These arrangements include logistical support, billeting and transportation issues, travel arrangements, and coordinating with HQ AU/PC and HQ AU/PA. (See para 1.3 and 1.4.)

1.1.9. Maintains a coordination and information flow between HQ AU/CC, HQ AU/XP, and school OPRs.

1.1.10. Establishes and maintains ties to the civilian education community by maintaining membership and actively participating in appropriate professional educational organizations. (See para 1.1.6.)

1.1.11. Establishes continuity procedures to assure the success of future reaffirmations by installing continuous review cycles pertinent to accreditation.

1.1.12. Develops and implements AU institutional effectiveness policy and procedures for evaluating and tracking the extent to which AU educational goals and objectives are being achieved. Uses the result of evaluations and program reviews to make suggestions for the improvement of AU educational programs, services, and operations.

## **1.2. AU Organizations:**

1.2.1. If appropriate, establish functional committees, executive committees, and working groups to provide AU with representation, leadership, and support while pursuing the goals of congressional degree granting and accreditation for their particular organization or school.

1.2.2. Submit proposed agenda items for formal meetings and/or official visits when requested by HQ AU/CFA.

1.2.3. When selected for official visits, brief selected topics as requested.

1.2.4. Host NACIQI, SACS, DOE and other committee or team members performing official visits or meetings.

1.2.5. Establish continuity procedures for the organization to assure the success of future accreditation reaffirmations.

1.2.6. Develop school instructions that implement institutional effectiveness policies and procedures. Insure linkage to the Air University strategic plan, mission statement (statement of purpose), and HQ AU policy and guidance on institutional effectiveness.

**1.3. Protocol (HQ AU/PC):**

1.3.1. Arranges quarters, meals, and refreshments for committee members, as needed. (See para 1.2.4.)

1.3.2. Provides nametags for committee members and placards for formal meetings or official visits, if required.

1.3.3. Prepares AU conference room for meetings/visits.

1.3.4. Provides HQ AU/CFA the costs of all committee meetings or visit functions, to include special luncheons, dinners, memorabilia, etc., when necessary.

**1.4. Director of Public Affairs (HQ AU/PA).** Conducts public affairs related duties in connection with the official meetings or visits of team members. (See para 1.2.)

**1.5. Staff Judge Advocate (HQ AU/JA).** Assists HQ AU/CFA with legislative issues and procedures necessary to achieve the goals of congressional degree granting and accreditation required by DODD 5500/7R.

**1.6. Plans and Operations (HQ AU/XPX).**

1.6.1. Develops AU strategic plan that has as a minimum the following elements focused on the university system: mission statement appropriate to collegiate education (statement of purpose), achievable and measurable goals and objectives with suggested metrics. The goals and objectives must link to the mission statement (statement of purpose).

1.6.2. Conducts an annual review and revision (as needed) of the AU mission statement and strategic plan to ensure that they reflect the current state of the AU system.

**2. Accreditation Milestones/Timelines.**

2.1. Schools may not describe their relationship with SACS in any other way than the strictly prescribed statements in para 1.6 of the SACS *Criteria for Accreditation Handbook*.

2.2. Typical timelines projected by SACS in their guidance on accreditation procedures ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)) are as follows:

2.2.1. Candidacy review process: Generally 1 year or less.

2.2.2. Authorization of Candidacy Committee visit: Must not exceed 2 years from initial application.

2.2.3. Decision to grant or deny candidacy: 12 months or more from Candidacy Committee visit.

2.2.4. Candidacy status: Maximum of 4 years, within which the university must:

2.2.4.1. Conduct an acceptable self-study.

2.2.4.2. Receive a visit from the chair of the Accreditation Committee (2 months in advance of Accreditation Committee visit).

2.2.4.3. Receive a visit from the Accreditation Committee (within 2 years, after granting of candidacy status).

2.2.4.4. Respond to Accreditation Committee's report.

2.3. When initial accreditation has been achieved, the institution must be reaffirmed 5 years after membership and every 10 years thereafter, to maintain accreditation. (See para 1.1.11 and 1.2.5.) Reaffirmation requires another self-study and a visit from a SACS peer review team. (See para 1.1.5 and 1.1.7.)

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